

# *prospects*

## Resume Dos and Don'ts

### **Keep the resume brief, clear and concise.**

Employers may only take 30 seconds to determine from your resume whether or not they will give you an interview. You want them to see right away that you are qualified for the position. Your goal is to make the reader interested enough to want to talk to you in person.

**Include a header on each page.** This should include your name and contact information. The employer shouldn't have to search for this information in order to contact you.

**Always put work history and education in chronological order, starting with the most recent.** Your most recent experience is always the most important.

**Be sure there are absolutely no spelling or grammar mistakes.** Proofread your resume numerous times. Use the spell-checker on your computer, but don't rely on that alone: get someone else to read it over too. One mistake could give a potential employer the wrong impression.

**Try to limit your resume to two pages.** They don't need your life story. Include only experiences and information that are crucial to the position.

**Use strong action verbs and do not use the word 'I'.** Under each heading use bullet form to outline your responsibilities and experiences.

**Tailor the resume to suit the position you are applying for.** If you are applying for a position in accounting, you need not mention in detail your background as a classical pianist.

**Include a section on relevant skills.** This may include computer and typing skills, and languages of proficiency.

**Be honest.** Don't lie about your past experiences or exaggerate about your involvement.

**Do not state your reasons for leaving another position.** This looks very unprofessional.

**Do not include personal information such as age, weight, social insurance number or religion.** Your interviewer may make a subconscious judgement that could affect your chances of getting the position.


**Include references or state 'references available upon request'.** Make sure your references are aware you are using them so they're prepared to talk about you. Share a copy of your resume with them. Try to find references with credentials—past employers, teachers and professors as opposed to friends and neighbours.

**Where possible, use exact dates.** Simply saying that you worked for a company in a certain year is not enough; it could mean that you worked there for the entire year or that you worked there for only a day in that year.

**Avoid listing unnecessary information.** If you've graduated from university, you do not need to mention your high school. The same is true for employment experience: you don't necessarily need to go all the way back to your days as a babysitter.

**Always save your resume for future use.** Although you may want to change it to suit different positions, many aspects of your resume will remain the same. Keep a copy or save it on your computer.

**Be formal.** Use formal language and avoid contractions (can't, doesn't, it's) and abbreviations. Do not use slang.



**Pick out key words from the job description and repeat them in your resume.** If specific skills are mentioned, you want the employer to know you have them.

**Use a standard font and keep it neat and uncluttered.** Your resume should be easy to read. Choose a font that looks professional and keep it at 10-to 12-point type.

**Use your own words.** Do not try to sound smarter or older than you are; this will be immediately obvious to the person reading the resume. It is better to use simple and plain language.

**Use word processors for formatting.** Many word processors have layouts already set up for you; all you need to do is fill in the blanks.